

**Corrected MINUTES**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**CHARLOTTE HARBOR**  
**COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**Monday, October 6, 2014 – 10:30 a.m.**  
County Administration Building – Room 119  
18500 Murdock Circle, Port Charlotte, FL 33948

**Members Present**

James Herston, *Chairman*  
Garland Wilson, *Vice Chairman*  
Charlotte Ventola, *Secretary*  
Denise Garbacq  
Delmar Wooden

**Staff Present**

Debrah Forester, *Redevelopment Manager*  
Commissioner Kenneth Doherty  
Shaun Cullinan, *Community Development*  
Tommy Scott, *Community Services*  
Matt Trepal, *Community Development*  
Kathy M. Knee, *Recorder*

**Members Absent**

Michael Haymans  
Vanessa Oliver

---

**I. Call to Order**

Chairman Herston called the October 6, 2014 meeting of the Charlotte Harbor Community Redevelopment Agency Advisory Committee to order at 10:33 a.m. in Room 119 of the Charlotte County Administration Building.

**II. Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman Herston led the members and the audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

**III. Roll Call/Determination of Quorum**

Roll call was taken by Charlotte Ventola. A quorum was present.

Debrah Forester introduced Denise Garbacq and noted Vanessa Oliver is also a new member but Ms. Oliver was unable to attend today. Ms. Garbacq met with Ms. Forester last week for an overview of the Committee's activities. Ms. Garbacq noted she is eager to be a part of the Committee and looks forward to working with the Committee.

**IV. Additions/Deletions to Agenda –**

Ms. Forester requested that two items be added to the Agenda under New Business: Bridge Sweeping and an Update on Tax Increments. Mr. Herston confirmed they would be added as Items b and c respectively.

**V. Approval of Minutes**

Notes from the July 30, 2014 Whidden Park Community Meeting were presented to the Committee for informational purposes.

**A Motion was presented by Delmar Wooden, seconded by Garland Wilson and unanimously approved to accept the Minutes of the September 8, 2014 Regular Meeting of the Charlotte Harbor Community Redevelopment Agency Advisory Committee as written.**

**VI. Commissioner Comments**

Commissioner Doherty welcomed Denise Garbacq, the new Committee member, and thanked all the members for volunteering their time.

**VII. Public Comments**

Cassandra Wooden, a CRA property owner, asked the Committee to consider offering the Peace River Wildlife Center the opportunity to relocate to Charlotte Harbor. The current building they are using is in bad shape. They are thinking about rebuilding but could relocate. The Center would need about 2 acres. There are several sites that might be usable in Charlotte Harbor but the one Ms. Wooden had in mind includes Sibley Bay Creek east of Central and the adjacent lots extending to Ganyard, along with Sibley Bay to Seneca. Some of this land is a wetlands area.

Bill Schmitz thought Mrs. Wooden's proposal was a good idea. He mentioned that the Wildlife Center could go where the Historical Center is located if the Center is not going to return. Mr. Schmitz recommended that the comp plan changes be pushed through as is and he appreciates the Committee staying focused.

**VIII. Development Review Report**

Jim Herston noted that Mattress Firm received its CO and there are still no tenants at the Coral Rock Café.

**IX. Old Business**

- a. **Tax Presentation** – Tommy Scott, Director of Community Services, presented information on the extension of the penny sales tax. Mr. Scott gave a brief history of projects completed over the years with sales tax funds and the proposed sales tax projects if the extension is approved. Additional information can be found on the Charlotte County website.
- b. **Historical Center Update** – Tommy Scott reported that the Historical Center structure was identified to be in need of renovations which were postponed due to budget constraints. The estimated cost to do the renovations is \$585,000. There has been two BCC Workshops to discuss the Historical Center. There are some concerns about spending such a large amount of money at the site because the building is about 2 – 2½ feet below flood elevation. Building code requires that if you spend 50% of the value of the property on renovations you will need to raise the building to meet current flood elevations. The current value of the property and building is \$800,000. The proposal renovations would exceed the 50% rule and then additional costs would be incurred to raise the structure. The BCC asked for options. One option would be to demolish the current building and relocate the historical functions. A concern which was raised is that money was given to the project from the Florida Community Trust. The entire park is included in two grants. Research was done to determine if removing the building from the park property would be detrimental to the grant and it was determined that it would not be. The educational component, 24 environmental or historical programs a year, needs to be there and the park amenity needs to be there. The historical center does not necessarily have to be there and the center itself is not tied to the grant. If demolished, the site can be rehabbed to make it parklike. A park amenity, such as a pavilion or cover for the amphitheater to make it more useable for special events or to house the educational components, is being considered as well as picnic tables. The cost to demolish the center and relocate its functions, approximately \$400,000, is significantly less than doing the renovations and staff is looking at ways to lower that cost. Staff believes this is the best course of action and the best use of taxpayer dollars. Staff will continue to explore the use of the building by the CRA or other non-profits but then renovations would have to be kept under the 50% allowance. In anticipation for the renovation or relocation, some displays have already been moved to the libraries; some classes are being held at the schools. The Gray Street Annex can be a short term housing solution; a long term housing solution for the Historical Center has not been determined. Ms. Forester asked Mr. Scott to come back with an update as more information becomes available.
- c. **Bayshore Park Update and Introductions** – Tommy Scott introduced Marc Solomon, the Recreation Supervisor, and Trish Sturgess, the Recreation Specialist and Event Programmer. Ms. Sturgess helped with this year's Beer & Wine Festival which will be held this coming weekend.
- d. **Hands Across the Harbor Update** – Debrah Forester announced that the 2015 Hands Across the Harbor event will be starting off at Bayshore Live Oak Park. Sponsors and volunteers are needed.
- e. **Special Exception** – 23371 Harborview Road – Debrah Forester noted that this item is being postponed until November because Michael Haymans was unable to attend today's meeting.

- f. Revitalization Plan – Matt Trepal reported that a public workshop is scheduled for November 5 at the Charlotte Harbor Event Center to discuss the Charlotte Harbor CRA comp plan changes, amendments to the future land use map and the revitalization plan. The creation of the Charlotte Harbor CRA Revitalization Plan resulted in a need to move some policies around. Debrah Forester noted that a few clean up changes were made and they were included in the meeting packet. Ms. Forester reviewed those changes. Discussion followed regarding changing the word “will” to “may” when granting density units. Staff noted the County needed to have the ability to grant or not to grant density units because there is a finite number of density units and therefore they cannot be in a position to always say yes. Comments from Committee members included: developers may not even submit a plan if there is not definite assurance; use “will” with first come, first served language; and have a pre-approval process to see if density is available. Staff will look into what options might be available to address this issue. It was pointed out that non-certified energy efficiency is listed under the Riverwalk and should be included in the NBR section. It was suggested that the height increase language in Riverwalk and Gateway should be clarified. All Charlotte Harbor CRA property owners will receive an invitation to attend the meeting being held on November 5.

**X. New Business**

- a. Letter Requesting Future Land Use Map Amendment – Debrah Forester noted a letter was received from Mr. Haymans regarding a future land use map amendment. If the Committee were to support this request the current timelines for submissions to appropriate boards and the public would need to be revised. The Committee could proceed as planned and the applicant can do a small scale amendment on their own. Shaun Cullinan explained the expanded use special exception for those Committee members who were not present last month. The applicant has a few options available to move forward. The Committee was asked if they would like to address this issue now and delay the approval process for their proposed amendments or address this issue at a later date. A brief discussion followed and it was the consensus of the Committee to move forward on the current schedule - a Community Meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 5 at 5:30 p.m.; the proposed amendment changes will go to the P&Z in December and the BCC in January. This special exception will be address at the November meeting.
- b. Bridge Sweeping – Debrah Forester noted that she received an email from the City of Punta Gorda. The City maintains the sweeping of the bridge and they would like to do it on a more regular basis. Currently they sweep monthly, 12 times a year, but because the bridge is used by bicyclists and walkers the City wants to do the sweeping on a weekly basis. The City is asking if the Charlotte Harbor CRA would like to share the cost which is currently \$2,200 annually. Ms. Forester has forwarded this request to Administration to determine if there was another funding source available. Charlotte Harbor TIF dollars are limited and the Harborwalk project is coming up next year. Ms. Forester will let the Committee know if there are other options when she hears back from Administration. Charlotte Ventola asked to see an updated budget report.
- c. Tax Increment Notice – Debrah Forester advised that she has received the certified tax roll amount for Charlotte Harbor. Overall property values went up. Tax increment for this year is \$62,187, an increase of about \$11,000 from last year. Numbers are going up but slowly, in part due to changes in homestead exemptions and also the limits on how much commercial property can increase.

**XI. Correspondence/Communications - The Minutes of the Punta Gorda CRA meeting of September 3, 2014 were included in the meeting packet.**

Jim Herston advised Matt Trepal that the waterfront overlay is in conflict with what is trying to be done with the revitalization plan. Mr. Trepal advised that ultimately, following the adoption of the revitalization plan and the revisions to the comp plan and zoning code, Charlotte Harbor CRA will be exempt from the waterfront overlay.

**XII. Public Comments –**

Harry Thomas recommended that the revisions the Committee has been working on should move forward as is because the updates could be delayed forever if someone shows up each month asking for a special exception. Mr. Thomas also noted that "may" and "will" do have different definitions and it makes a difference when dealing with people. The word "will" is his preference.

Bill Schmitz, Bayshore Marine, stated that the County should not be too hasty in knocking down the Historical Center. The renovation price seems high. Charlotte Harbor needs something to attract people to the area.

**XIII. Staff Comments – None.**

**XIV. Attorney Comments - None.**

**XV. Member Comments**

- Denise Garbacq noted she was taking in all the information. She does have an issue with moving the Historical Center to Punta Gorda because temporarily often leads to permanent.
- Delmar Wooden noted that he supports the idea of having the Wildlife Center look into the Sibley Creek area but he did want to make it known that Cassandra Wooden is his wife. Mr. Wooden also mentioned the following items:
  - The grating along the seawalls at Bayshore Park is rusting already and needs maintenance or replacement.
  - The historical markers are unreadable and have become an eyesore; they should be replaced or removed.
  - The County bought property at Seneca-Central and Oakley for parking. The lots are not being mowed.
  - What happened to having a Charlotte Harbor Code Compliance Officer? Shaun Cullinan responded that although Community Development is hoping to increase staff, approval has not been received from Administration.
  - Adjacent to 29987 and 29991 on Bayshore Road are two abandoned houses. There was a fire recently and the houses are without doors and windows. Shaun Cullinan will have staff check into this matter.
- Garland Wilson asked if certain property just off Harper was a part of the Gateway Area. Matt Trepal responded that the property in question was in the Melbourne Neighborhood. Mr. Wilson requested an updated copy of the CRAs budget. Debrah Forester noted she will work on the Plan for 2015.

**XVI. Next Meeting Date**

The next regular meeting of the Charlotte Harbor Community Redevelopment Agency Advisory Committee will be held on **Monday, November 3, 2014 at 10:30 a.m. in Room 119 of the Charlotte County Administration Center.** On November 5 there will a **Charlotte Harbor CRA Community Meeting at the Charlotte Harbor Event Center** to discuss land use changes and the revitalization plan.

**XVII. Adjournment - There being no further business, the meeting **ADJOURNED** at 12:27 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

  
Charlotte Ventola, Secretary

/kmk

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

11/3/2014